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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 COLOMBO 001190

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DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS; NSC FOR E. MILLARD

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07-19-14

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#) [NO](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: PEACE PROCESS READ-OUT FROM NORWEGIAN
AMBASSADOR

(U) Classified by Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead.
Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Norwegian Ambassador Brattskar was blunt in telling the LTTE suicide bombings had to stop. The LTTE neither confirmed nor denied its responsibility. The LTTE complained about alleged government support for Karuna. President Kumaratunga told Brattskar she knew nothing about military support for Karuna, and that if it existed, it should stop. Peace Secretariat Head Dhanapala said President had given clear orders not to support Karuna. As the UPFA faces internal dissent on peace process policy, it makes an effort to reach out to the opposition--which is wary.
END SUMMARY

Norwegian in Kilinochchi

2. (C) Ambassador met with Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar on July 15 to discuss Brattskar's visit to Kilinochchi on July 13 and meeting with President Kumaratunga on July 14. Brattskar said the meeting with the LTTE leadership (Tamilchelvan, Kausalyan and Ramesh) was tough and business-like, but not unfriendly. Brattskar spent lots of time discussing the recent suicide bombing in Colombo. He emphasized that this type of act was morally wrong, and noted the political context of a post-9/11 world and current Middle East developments. He also discussed the upsurge of political violence in the East.

3. (C) Tamilchelvan in response made several comments. He said that of the several statements on the suicide bombing issued by other countries--EU, Japan, Canada, US--only the US statement pointed to the LTTE as the perpetrator. Interestingly, Brattskar said, Tamilchelvan did not deny responsibility for the bombing, although he did not take responsibility, either. Tamilchelvan continued that "no one" makes statements about the terrorist events in the East, which he claimed are the result of cooperation between break-away LTTE leader Karuna and Sri Lankan Military Intelligence. (In fact, all of the statements referred to the violence in the East and called on both sides to take steps to end it.) He said that he understood the political connotation of suicide bombings, and would pass these views on to "the leadership," i.e., Prabhakaran.

4. (C) Brattskar said he would meet with new Sri Lankan Army Chief General Kottegoda shortly, and would tell him directly that the violence in the East needed to stop. Noting that word had just come in of the killing in a Batticaloa prison that day of a Karuna supporter, Brattskar said that academics and professionals were leaving the East because of threats from Karuna's people.

President "Knew Nothing" About Support for Karuna

5. (C) Brattskar said that in this meeting with President Kumaratunga, he had been "frank and blunt" about the situation in the East. Kumaratunga told him that she "knew nothing" about alleged military support for Karuna; if it had happened, she said, it should not continue.

Movement on Agenda for Talks?

6. (C) Brattskar said that Norway is ready to present a new proposal on the agenda for the talks, but can only do that after things quiet down in the East. The President is interested in Norway doing so, but, Brattskar said, she needs to decide the timing. She has problems controlling her own coalition, and the radical Sinhalese JVP continues to make public statements which undermine her position on the peace talks. Brattskar

said that the LTTE also complained about statements by Tamil leader and Minister in the current government Douglas Devananda. The President said that Douglas was "in the government but not in the coalition."

Helgessen to Visit

17. (C) Brattskar concluded that Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgessen would come to Sri Lanka around July 25. In the meantime, Brattskar said, he was concerned that the Cease Fire Agreement was "fraying around the edges."
Dhanapala: President Gave Clear Orders

18. (C) Ambassador met later on July 15 with Peace Secretariat Head Jayantha Dhanapala. Concerning the

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situation in the East and allegations that the Sri Lankan military was assisting Karuna, he said that the President had given "clear orders" that this was not to happen. Batticaloa in particular was always unsettled, he said. At any rate, the government had to protect Karuna if he requested it. Dhanapala said that he would travel to Batticaloa the next day to assess the situation on the ground. Regarding the suicide bombing, he said that the Government greatly appreciated the US statement (in contrast to the statements by Japan, the EU and Canada, which did not mention the LTTE.)

Political Party Differences

19. (C) Dhanapala said the government was now waiting on the Norwegians on the agenda issue. Queried about the JVP's recent negative comments on the peace process, Dhanapala said that he had attended the governing UPFA coalition's meeting of party leaders to discuss the peace process on July 13. At that meeting, the JVP had maintained that its views on the issue as a party were distinct from its official position of the alliance. Dhanapala said that at this meeting the UPFA had decided to invite the other political parties to participate in the new "National Peace Council." In particular, they wanted the UNP to participate. He noted also that Parliament would debate the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) proposal when it reconvened the following week. Ambassador said that attempts to gain UNP cooperation might have a greater chance of success if the UPFA ceased harassing UNP leaders as in the recent attempt to harass former Trade and Commerce Minister Karunanayake. Dhanapala verbally shrugged as if to say: "That's politics."

COMMENT

110. (C) All protestations to the contrary, we believe that the Sri Lankan military was assisting Karuna and his followers. We cannot assess whether they are still doing so. We discussed the proposed National Peace Council and the debate on the ISGA with several UNP leaders over the weekend, urging them to take a constructive approach. They remain wary. One version is that UNP leader Ranil Wickremasinghe will agree to participate in the NPC only after the entire UPFA government has made a clear and unified statement of its own position on the issues. That may be a while in coming.

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